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Francolinus schlegelii Heuglin in Cameroon

by Mr. Melvin A. Traylor

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While working with the Francolins at the Chicago Natural History Museum I came across a previously unrecognised specimen of *Francolinus schlegelii* Heuglin. It was an adult male, collected 60 miles south of Yaoundere, Cameroon, 13th March, 1953, by A. I. Good. Since this would be the first record of the species from Cameroon, I sent the specimen to Mrs. B. P. Hall at the British Museum with the request that she compare it with topotypes there and confirm my identification. This she very kindly did, and noting that the Cameroon bird was a richer chestnut above and deeper buff below than any topotypical males, she loaned me two males and two females of *schlegelii* so that I might compare them myself. In addition, I have been able to borrow two males and two females from the Ubangi-Shari through the kindness of Dr. Jacques Berlioz of the Museum National d'Histoire Natural and Dr. Charles Vaurie of the American Museum of Natural History.

When the above specimens are layed out geographically, a great deal of variation is evident, but without any apparent pattern. Starting first with males, the two topotypes from Bahr-el-Ghazal are fairly uniform, and since Mrs. Hall selected them to show the extremes of variation of a long series, topotypical males evidently show little variation. They are characterized by having the upper parts chestnut, each feather with a narrow whitish or buff centre stripe edged with dusky and with a faint grayish bloom on the tip. The rump is vermiculated with dusky and in one specimen the vermiculations extend onto the lower back. The crown

is dark brown, each feather edged with chestnut at the base and with a faintly paler tip. The ground colour of the under parts varies from whitish to pale buff.

Two males from western Ubangi-Shari are highly variable. The first, from Bozoum, has the chestnut confined to the hind neck and the remainder of the upper parts more gray-brown, vermiculated with dusky, and with only a wash of chestnut at the base of each feather. The second, from Bouar, is almost exactly intermediate between the Bozoum bird and typical *schelgelii*, although geographically it comes from west of Bozoum, away from *schlegelii*. The crown and underparts of both Ubangi-Shari birds are similar to the darker of the two topotypical *schlegelii*.

The Cameroon male, although from a locality even further west, more nearly resembles the Sudan than the Ubangi-Shari specimens, but it is a much darker, richer chestnut above, the vermiculations on the rump are almost lost, the crown is chestnut with dusky centres to the feathers, and the ground colour of the under parts is dark buff, almost as dark as the unbarred throat. It stands out markedly from any of the other specimens.

Female topotypes show more individual variation than males. Of the two specimens available which show the extremes of variation, one has the upper back pale chestnut washed with gray and with narrow whitish shaft stripes grading into a more brownish gray on the lower back and rump. The other has the brownish gray covering the whole back, the pale shaft stripes are almost wanting, and there is only a slight chestnut wash at the base of each feather. Neither shows more than a trace of vermiculation. The crown on the first is a pale brown washed with chestnut, that of the second dark brown.

A female from Ndele, eastern Ubangi-Shari, is intermediate in colour between the two typical females, although more vermiculated on the upper parts than either. A female from the Manongo River (8° 30′ N, 22° E) differs strikingly from all others, however. It is chestnut above and resembles the typical males, except that the shaft streaks are much reduced and there are no vermiculations on the lower back and rump. This is not a missexed male; there is no trace of any spur, the tarsus is short, 29.5, falling into the range of the females, 29–32, rather than of the males, 33–35.5, and the transverse barring of the breast is irregular rather than straight across as in the male. The crown is heavily washed with chestnut, almost as much as in the Cameroon male. This specimen differs so much from all other females that it suggests that two colour phases may be found in this sex.

If only the Cameroon and Sudan specimens were to be considered, I would not hesitate to describe the former as a new race. However, this would almost necessitate recognizing a third race from the Ubangi-Shari, and the present material does not give a clear enough picture of the variation in that territory to support such an action. Considering the extreme variability shown by the Ubangi-Shari populations, long series from each locality are essential to show the extremes of variation to be found in each population. The most that can be done now is to put the facts on record and hope that someone with more material will be able to clarify the problem. If a race from the Ubangi-Shari is to be recognized, the name *Francolinus schlegelii confusus* Neumann (1933, Verh. Orn. Ges. Bayern, 20: 225), type locality Bozoum is available.

The discovery of *Francolinus schlegelii* in Cameroon is a tribute to the collecting skill of Dr. Good, who also discovered *Francolinus albogularis gambagae* in Cameroon at Garoua (Good, 1952, Mem. Inst. Fran. Afr. Noire, Sci. Nat., no. 2, pt. 1 : 67).

The Egg of the Somaliland Pigeon, *Columba olivae* Clarke

by Captain Charles R. S. Pitman

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Columba olivae was described by Stephenson Clarke *ibid* 38, p. 61, 1918, but nothing was known about its breeding habits, nor yet where it went between May and September.

On 24th August, 1944, at Eil on the coast of Somalia, lat. 8° N., long. 50° E., which is near this pigeon's southern limit, Mr. M. E. W. North found a 'dropped' fresh egg on the floor of a hole in the roof of a maritime cliff, and within two feet of an unoccupied nest. Examples of these pigeons were seen in the hole.

The egg, which is now in the British Museum (Natural History), measures 37.3 x 25.4 mm. and, as to be expected, is a typical, though rather narrow and elongate, pigeon's egg—white in colour and fairly glossy. In shape it is oval, with a slight point at one end.

The distribution and habits of this bird are discussed by Sir Geoffrey Archer and Eva M. Godman in *Birds of Somaliland and the Aden Protectorate*, Vol. 2, pp. 573–575.

On *Cisticola chiniana procera* Peters

by Mr. C. M. N. White

Received 6th January, 1960

Lynes in his Cisticola review (1939) used *procera* for the race of *Cisticola chiniana* found in the lower Zambezi, Nyasaland and northern Portuguese East Africa. At that time he thought that *C. c. frater* extended from northern South West Africa to the middle Zambezi escarpment and was replaced further east by the less streaked *procera*. Vincent states (B.B.O.C. 64. 63–64, 1944) that Lynes was dissatisfied with this arrangement, thought *procera* (described from Tete) indeterminate as too close to *frater*, and wished to rename the race described under *procera* in his review from a locality further east. Accordingly Vincent proposed *C. c. emendata*. For some reason in doing this Vincent still retained *procera* as a named race with a very limited range.

All this appears to have been based on a series of misunderstandings about the distribution of races in this part of Africa. *C. c. frater*, a slightly paler and less streaked bird than typical *chiniana* does not extend anything like so far east, and is mainly found in northern South West Africa and south Angola; from Ngamiland over north Bechuanaland, south Barotseland and east to about Wankie and Matetsi in west Southern Rhodesia occurs the very distinct greyish race *smithersi* Hall. Typical *chiniana* occurs east of this and north of the Zambezi from below the Victoria Falls to the Gwembe and Kariba parts of the Zambezi valley, and north